

Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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USMISSION NATO

UNCLAS COPENHAGEN 0489

PASS COMMERCE: NMFS/BLONDIN; NOAA/WALLACE

E.O.: 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIS, DA

SUBJ: REPORT ON NORTH SEA BAN

REF : COPENHAGEN 164

1. THE DANISH FISHING INDUSTRY WAS HIGHLY AGITATED WHEN THE LOCAL PRESS, APPARENTLY ERRONEOUSLY, REPORTED THAT DANISH FISHERIES MINISTER DALSAGER HAD TOLD JOURNALISTS IN BRUSSELS LAST WEEK THAT HE WOULD ACCEPT A BAN ON HERRING FISHING IN THE NORTH SEA DURING 1977, PROVIDED THAT DANISH FISHERMEN WERE ALLOWED TO INCREASE CATCHES OF OTHER SPECIES FOR INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES SUCH AS NORWAY POUT, MACKERAL AND BLUE WHITING. MINISTER DALSAGER SUBSEQUENTLY DENIED THE REPORT
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BUT NOT BEFORE HIS RESIGNATION WAS DEMANDED BY IRATE INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES.

2. COMMENT: THE DANISH FISH MEAL INDUSTRY IS FIGHTING A DELAYING ACTION TO PREVENT OR REDUCE THE IMPACT OF THE EC'S EFFORTS TO FORCE DENMARK TO ACCEPT EFFECTIVE CONSERVATION MEASURES ON THE NORTH SEA HERRING RESOURCES. DURING THE

PAST DECADE DANES HAVE TRIPPLED THEIR INDUSTRIAL FISH PRODUCTION WITH THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT'S SANCTION. AND, DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS, EFFORTS BY NEAFC TO REDUCE HERRING QUOTAS HAVE EFFECTIVELY BEEN CURTAILED BY THE DANISH DEL-EGATION TO ENABLE THEIR INDUSTRIAL FISHERY TO CONTINUE UNABATED.

3. THE PROBLEM CENTERS AROUND THE INDUSTRIAL FISHERY FOR SPRAT WHICH, ACCORDING TO DANISH INDUSTRY MEMBERS, INTER-MINGLE WITH HERRING SCHOOLS MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE FISHERMEN TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN THE TWO SPECIES ON THEIR ELECTRONIC ECHO-SOUNDERS OR SONAR EQUIPMENT. THE DANES ANNUALLY LAND AROUND 400,000 TONS OF SPRAT/HERRING IN THEIR INDUSTRIAL FISHERY. A TOTAL BAN ON HERRING FISHING WOULD FORCE THE SPRAT FLEET TO EITHER TIE UP OR CONVERT THEIR VESSELS TO FISH FOR OTHER SPECIES. THIS LATTER WOULD BE EXPENSIVE AND TIME-CONSUMING AND WOULD, IN THE EVENT OF A TOTAL BAN, CAUSE AN IMMEDIATE DROP IN FISH MEAL PRODUCTION WITH AN ATTENDANT DROP IN EMPLOYMENT BOTH AFLOAT AND ASHORE.

4. THE DANES REALIZE THAT THE POOR CONDITION OF THE HERRING STOCKS IS GOING TO FORCE THEM ULTIMATELY TO RESTRUCTURE THEIR INDUSTRY. HOWEVER, THEY WOULD LIKE TO SPREAD THE VESSEL CONVERSATIONS OVER SEVERAL YEARS AND ALSO RECEIVE SOME FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE EC TO DEFRAY COSTS. IF SUCH A PROGRAM COULD SUCCESSFULLY BE WORKED OUT THROUGH THE EC, HERRING CONSERVATION POLICIES COULD BECOME EFFEC-TIVE AND THE EFFECT ON THE DANISH INDUSTRY WOULD BE MIN-IMAL.

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